CLIMATE NETWORK SUMMER NEWS LETTER....1995

FORM 3208B, WEATHER DIARY

With days of long hot sunshine, such as we have been having recently, it is easy to forget the reverse side of the form 3208B.

The weather diary is a very important element of the climatological history of a station. It also serves as a useful guide when checking for possible errors on the return. An observer may, for instance, have entered a suspect figure in the rainfall total. If the figures entered were thought to be too high a check on the weather diary could be made and an entry of 'heavy rain all day' would confirm the rainfall total.

If you are able to keep a weather diary you can use either Beaufort letters, plain language or a mixture of both. Details of Beaufort letters can be found in the *Observers Handbook*. It is appreciated that some observers are unable to complete a weather diary due to other commitments. In such cases even a limited diary would be very much appreciated. To limit the amount of writing involved, the diary should be confined to the reporting of weather phenomena such as thunderstorms, strong winds, hail, snow, fog, rain or any other weather event considered to be worthy of note.

A recent enquiry from a researcher investigating a large hail storm which moved across the country in February 1995, revealed the fact that many observers record minute details of significant weather events for their own interest but may not include them on their F3208B. **Of particular benefit are details of intensities and commencement and cessation times of events, recorded in GMT.**

The maxim is, if you think the event is significant, then we probably will as well.

If you have any questions regarding the Weather Diary or indeed any other queries please call us and we will attempt to give you an answer.

TRAINING COURSES FOR CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVERS IN 1995/1996.

The new season of training courses for Climatological Observers commences on 31st October 1995. At the time of writing there have been just 9 applications for this course and only 10 for the other 4 courses. There are still 41 places to fill. Please note that the January course has been brought forward and will now be held from the 16th to 19th.

Although it is still high summer and minds are focused on holidays etc., the time will soon fly by and nights will start drawing in. Now is the time to decide on a training course and come and meet us here in Bracknell. If you wish to apply, complete the form and return to us at the earliest opportunity. If you have lost your form please ring us and we will send you another. The closing date shown is 1st September 95 but we will continue to accept applications until the courses are full.

As you will appreciate the cost of running the courses is high and unless we are able to fill each course they are likely to be discontinued. If you have already attended a course you will know how useful they are and, hopefully, will recommend them to your fellow co-operating observers. The duration of each course is 3½ days and, as well as concentrating on the making of observations and the completion of the Form 3208B, there will be ample time to learn about the role of the Met. Office. There will also be a trip to Bracknell during which you will be able to meet the Quality Control Team face to face - an opportunity not to be missed!

Although no one is obliged to attend a course we feel that doing so not only increases knowledge of the task but affords the opportunity to meet like minded people in a very pleasant location on the outskirts of Reading.

We look forward to meeting you.

NEWSLETTER 1996

Well here we are again, making the annual plea for items for the next Newsletter.

If you have a pet theory or would like to tell your fellow observers about your station why not put your thoughts on paper. I am particularly keen to receive articles from people with weather dependant hobbies who use their climate readings in the pursuit of their interests.....e.g. Sailors, Gardeners, Aviators etc..

The article should reach me by the end of November, but if you contact me now and make a commitment I will save you some space.

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QUALITY CONTROL

DATA RECORDS SURVEY

During May, the Quality Control section sent you all (I hope) a questionnaire about the successors to hand-written amendment letters. To date, 133 replies have been received for which thanks. They have been read with interest and analysed. The results are as follows:

	YES	NO
ARE THE DATA PRINTOUTS UNDERSTANDABLE WITH THE HELP OF THE EXPLANATORY LETTER?	120	13
DO YOU REQUIRE FURTHER EXPLANATION?	26	101
DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE RECEIVING PRINTOUTS?	123	13
WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE THEM MONTHLY? OR	66	11
WOULD RECEIVING THEM QUARTERLY BE ACCEPTABLE?	72	26

Reading through your comments, the one thing that stands out is the wish to have the amended value highlighted. It is appreciated that this is an important concern and one which we will be able to address properly once the new Climate Data Archive comes into being. Until then we are stuck with this system and can only ask for your patience. The main sheet to concentrate on, generally, is the one showing maximum and minimum temperatures, rainfall etc..

The lack of explanation for changes causes real concern. We anticipated that a simple amendment, such as dry bulb temperature reading higher than the relevant maximum temperature, would not require explanation. Our staff are encouraged to contact you, however, should they have a more 'intricate' query or something seems to be persistently out of kilter. So, should you feel aggrieved, please contact your 'man' either by telephone or with your next return and please remember that an amended value is not a criticism, it is merely a query raised. The query has to be answered with logic, evidence and reasoning. To those of you missing a cheery call from Jan - he is not lost or gone forever!

We have had to economise on staff time but, as I am sure you appreciate, I am unable to comment upon this, whether politically correct or no! I can, however, give reassurance as to paper costs. The amendment letters took, apart from time, two sheets of good copier paper as well as photocopy costs. Computer paper, even three or four sheets, is **cheaper**.

I agree that, to be useful, the printouts should be made available as soon as possible. The delay in getting them to you is unlikely to be lessened significantly as there are various aspects which hinder instant response. Delays are caused by sorting out the vast pile of incoming post at the beginning of the month, typing the data into the computer and keeping to the schedule for running the series of QC programs.

Preferences for the old and new versions were equally divided. Indeed some recipients of the new are very much in favour! Many asked for an explanation of the methods used in doing the work. These are actually given in the handout supplied to those who attend college courses. If anyone has missed out on these handouts and would like one please let us know, we'll be only too happy to supply them.

I have tried to respond to the most frequently asked questions. Other queries, requests and suggestions will be looked into. Although...one or two responses were puzzling. This was not a questionnaire about the **M**onthly **W**eather **R**eport which has been unduly delayed over the last couple of years due to software problems at the Publishing Branch. I understand August 1992 is the last one to have been sent out. As to the gentleman who got a sexy hot line instead of Bristol Weather Centre, I presume that he is talking about his daily evening report. I do not know whether he was hoping for sympathy but I'll pass his message to Bristol anyway!

Thank you all for your time and commitment.

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